

5 STEPS for a Good Confession

1. Examine your conscience.
2. Be sincerely sorry for your sins.
3. Confess your sins.
4. Resolve to amend your life.
5. After confession, do the penance the priest assigns.

Act of Contrition (Said in the Confessional)

“O God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.

In choosing to do wrong
and failing to do good

I have sinned against You

whom I should love above all things.

I firmly intend, with Your help,

to do penance,

to sin no more,

and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.

Our Savior Jesus Christ

suffered and died for us.

In his name, my God, have mercy.

Procedure in the Confessional

The priest may begin with a Scripture reading. After he finishes, you say: *“Bless me, Father, in this confession. It has been —a week, or a month (state the length of time) —since my last confession. I accuse myself of the following sins.”*

Then tell your mortal sins and the number of times committed. If you have no mortal sins to confess, then confess two or three venial sins you have committed since your last confession. When you have finished telling your sins, you should say: *“For these and all the sins of my past life, especially for my sins of.....I am truly sorry.”*

The priest now gives the necessary advice, assigns your penance and asks you to say the Act of Contrition (in some form). Then wait and listen as the priest gives the absolution in English.

Then say *THANK YOU, FATHER*, and leave the confessional and perform the penance assigned by the priest.

Examination of Conscience

Many of these sins are mortal and the Eucharist is forbidden until a good confession is made to a priest. If in doubt whether a sin is mortal or venial, confess it and consult a good catechism or priest. A mortal sin involves 1. a serious matter, 2. there is sufficient reflection, and 3. it is committed with full consent of the will.

Did I deny or doubt God’s existence? Did I refuse to believe God’s revelation?

Have I gone to a fortune teller, used good luck charms or practice any other form of the Occult?

Did I deny that I was a Catholic? Did I leave the Catholic faith?

Did I despair of or presume on God’s mercy?

Did I neglect prayer for a long time?

Did I blaspheme God or take God’s name in vain, curse or break an oath or vow?

Did I miss Mass on Sunday or a holy day of obligation through my own fault?

Am I always reverent in the presence of Jesus in the most Blessed Sacrament?

Was I inattentive at Mass? Did I come to Mass late? How late? Did I leave Mass early?

Did I do unnecessary physical work on Sunday?

Did I disobey or disrespect my parents or legitimate superior?

Did I neglect my duties to my spouse, children, or parents?

Did I fail to actively take an interest in the religious education and formation of my children?

Have I failed to educate myself on the true teachings of the Church?

Did I give a full day’s work in return for my full day’s pay? Did I give a fair wage to my employee?

Did I give scandal by what I said or did, especially to the young? Was I the cause of anyone leaving the Faith?

Was I impatient, angry, envious, unkind, proud, jealous, revengeful, hateful toward others, lazy?

Did I give bad example, abuse drugs, drink alcohol to excess, fight or quarrel?

Did I physically injure or kill anyone? Have or advise for an abortion? *Procuring an abortion sometimes incurs the penalty of excommunication. This should be addressed with your priest during confession. (Canon 1398)*

Did I participate in or approve of the grave evil known as “mercy killing?” Did I attempt suicide?

NOTE: Sexual sins are always grave and are mortal if combined with full knowledge and deliberate consent of the will.

Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts and desires? Did I dress immodestly?

Did I use impure or suggestive words? Tell impure stories? Or listen to them?

Did I deliberately look at impure things, TV, videos, plays, pictures or movies? Or deliberately read impure material?

Did I commit an impure act by myself or with another? Which acts?

Did I marry or advise another to marry outside the Church?

Did I abuse my marriage rights? Was I unfaithful to my marriage vows?

Have I kept company with someone else’s spouse?

Did I practice artificial birth control or was I or my spouse sterilized?

Did I practice in vitro fertilization?

Did I steal, cheat, help or encourage others to steal, or keep stolen goods? Have I made restitution for stolen goods?

Did I fulfill my contracts, give or accept bribes, pay my bills, rashly gamble or speculate, deprive my family of necessities of life?

Did I tell lies? Deliberately to deceive? Or injure others by lies? Did I commit perjury? Was I uncharitable in word or deed, gossip or reveal others’ faults and sins? Fail to keep secrets I should have?

Did I eat meat on Fridays of Lent or Ash Wednesday?

Did I fast as required on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday?

Did I fail to receive Holy Communion during Easter time? Fail to confess at least once a year? Did I go to Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin? Without fasting (water and medicine permitted) for one hour from food and drink?

Did I make a bad confession?

Did I fail to contribute to the support of the Church?